

Using Roll Call Training for Risk Management

A TRAINING AND LEGAL

consultant, attorney, and Captain of the California Highway Patrol (CHP), Gordon Graham has introduced an interesting approach to risk management training in California. His roll call training program was developed specifically for the CHP, but because of its success, he is now teaching it to law enforcement administrators and managers throughout the nation. The San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department is currently evaluating the proper method of implementing Graham's roll call training into its own corrections training program.

Graham's risk management training program starts with an understanding of the much broader topic of "why things go right/why things go wrong." His analysis indicates that the job is extremely complex and those in law enforcement need to be the right people for the job. These "good" people also need good, sound policies; adequate training; and proper supervision and discipline.

Most encounter the problems faced in law enforcement daily and continue to face them over and over again. In most cases their experience provides them with the proper solution to the problems. Where

their experience is lacking, their training must fill in.

Traditionally, law enforcement officers start and end their careers in training. They begin with formal academy training, and they receive ongoing training annually. Graham notes that after graduation from the academy, however, the next "test" taken by the officer is usually an incident itself.

THE REDUNDANCY OF

most incidents provides the "experience" upon which success is achieved in dealing with them. The interesting aspect of Graham's risk management training concept is in how it deals with incidents or critical tasks that are low in frequency but high in risk.

High-risk/low-frequency incidents -- the ones you as Chief never want to go bad--don't happen often. When they do occur, however, they are complex, have a high probability of injury or death, and often involve civil or criminal litigation or internal discipline--they are simply embarrassments to the organization. More often than not, these incidents allow officers little time to consult others before making a decision.

It is these incidents that must be identified and be the subject of SROVT, a Graham acronym for:

- Solid
- Realistic
- Ongoing
- Verifiable
- Training.

These are the crucial tasks that must be subject to risk management. Often, critical decisions must be made immediately in these low-frequency, high-risk contexts, which means they are the areas that must be identified and subject to ongoing training. If such incidents ever do occur, they are too important to be responded to incorrectly; when they happen, the officer's response must be right.

Under the training program plan, the critical tasks for the job are first identified; next, applicable law, policy, and technique are formalized as sound organizational policies and procedures; then training is provided to take the place of experience. Emphasis placed on developing a policy that fully incorporates any applicable law and addresses the desired technique.

Training can then begin, first by making sure that each officer grasps the "S" and "R" of the program. That is, do they really know how to do the task the way it needs to be done if it happens? Are they Solid and Realistic? After staff have been trained and tested, follow-up occurs with the "O" and the "V." Once or twice a month, the training subjects are repeated (Ongoing) and tested (Verifiable) by supervisors.

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ANOTHER INTERESTING

feature of the program is the series of one- or two-page bulletins Graham has developed for use in roll call training. The California Highway Patrol is a very large organization with members spread over a wide geographical area. The training distribution task is made easy through the organizational attitude that "every day is a training day" and through department-wide scheduling of the training bulletins.

The bulletins are published each week based on a pre-determined schedule. Each member of the department, throughout the state, in a particular job assignment, receives the same training bulletin and training subject.

In addition, every supervisor statewide receives the training calendar and corresponding bulletins at the beginning of each month. All topics, which include such issues as "Exclusion from Disaster Areas" and "Handcuffing the Obese Person," are presented in the same basic format. Each bulletin includes an informational scenario, a critical issues discussion, and an occupational safety tip if appropriate. Supervisors also receive question and discussion keys.

A typical training topic is covered at roll call in only 6 minutes-it is short and simple. This fits Graham's philosophy that training repetition is the key to replacing experience.

A color coding system for policies and procedures complements the total risk management package:

- The system assumes that 95 percent of the policies will address low-risk/low-frequency and low-risk/high-

frequency incidents. Repeated experience provides the real training for these, and the policies are not referred to as often. Policies in these subjects are coded white.

- Policies that cover high-risk/high-frequency incidents are coded another color, such as yellow. They occur often enough that only periodic review of the policies is required, even though the incidents are high-risk.
- Policies addressing high-risk/low-frequency incidents are red. Successful handling of these incidents depends on an officer's remembering the policies at the time of the incident. Periodic review of the red policies is a must.

THE RISK MANAGEMENT

training concept is equally applicable to both the operations and the correctional aspects of the modern agency. Persons interested in learning more about risk management SROVT training or acquiring Graham's training and information video series for law enforcement personnel can contact him directly. Address inquiries to Graham Research Consultants, 6475 East Pacific Coast Highway, Suite 136, Long Beach, California, 90803-4692; telephone (714) 374-9326.

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